Cutting Woods in North East

2785. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Supreme Court has not restricted the cutting of woods of the North Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details of Supreme Court judgement in this regard; and

(c) how far it affects the resource mobilisation from forests in North Eastern States?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Supreme Court vide its order dated 12.5.2001 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 202/95 has directed that felling of trees from forests shall be done in accordance with the working plans/schemes or felling schemes approved by the Ministry of Environment and Forests as per its earlier order dated 15.1.1998. For felling of trees from non-forest area including in respect of plantations on non-forest areas, detailed guidelines/rules shall be framed by the State Governments which shall come into effect after the same are concurred with modification, if any, by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) It is expected that strict compliance of these orders would result in sustained availability of forest resources.

Development of Sabrimala

2786. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to allot forest land for development of Sabarimala in Kerala is pending for clearance with Government; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Sabarimala is situated inside Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. According to section-29 of the Wildlife

(Protection) Act, diversion of any habitat for non-forestry purposes is prohibited. Further, Supreme Court has directed in Writ Petition No. 202/1995 that no felling of trees and removal of grass should be done in the area notified as Wildlife Sanctuary. In view of the facts mentioned above, Ministry of Environment & Forests, after detailed examination, have allowed the Sabarimala Trust for permissive use of areas along Pamba-Sannidhanam road for pitching the tents for visitors. No felling of trees and removal of vegetation is permissible for the purpose. Supreme Court in recent hearing has directed the Ministry to ensure that the forest land is restored to its original condition after the end of the Yatra Season. Kerala Government has been requested to plan the other facilities outside the Sanctuary.

Illegal zoos

2787. SHRI KA. RA. SUBBIAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of illegal zoos in Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country since January, 2001;

(b) whether an illegal zoo near Mumbai came to light last year; and

(c) the action taken against those running illegal zoos and against those who keep endangered black buck, in violation of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Tamil Nadu Government has reported that 3 illegal zoos that were operating in the State have been closed and the animals in their possession have been confiscated and sent to Aringar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur. Another zoo which was operating without the recognition of the Central Zoo Authority in Solan, Himachal Pradesh has also been asked to close down. Chief Wildlife Warden of the State has been asked to take charge of the animals of this zoo.

(b) and (c) During last year, some illegally kept wild animals were seized by the enforcement authorities from Aayush Resort, Panvel,